

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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FOLLOWING REPEAT ISLAMABAD 2685 ACTION SECSTATE 21 MAR 77

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, PK, SCUL, CENTO,

SUBJ: CENTO ECONOMIC COMMITTEE MEETING - PAKISTAN MICROWAVE

1. SUMMARY: AS EXPECTED, GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN WAS DIS-
APPOINTED TO LEARN THAT USG COULD NOT PROVIDE \$500,000 CON-
TRIBUTION TO CENTO CIVILIAN MICROWAVE SYSTEM, BUT SOMEWHAT
REASSURED BY USG'S WILLINGNESS TO USE THE MONEY FOR OTHER
CENTO PURPOSES. PRIVATELY, GOP ADDITIONAL SECRETARY (ECON-
OMIC AFFAIRS) SARFRAZ KHAN MALIK EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT
THIS MOVE MIGHT FUEL DOUBTS ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF CENTO;
DURING THE MEETING, HOWEVER, THE GOP LIMITED ITS STATEMENTS
TO THE MINIMUM. END SUMMARY.

2. NEA/RA DIRECTOR PALMER, AID/W'S RICHTER AND EMBOFF T.

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SCHAFER CALLED ON EAD ADDITIONAL SECRETARY SARFRAZ KHAN
MALIK, WHO WAS TO LEAD PAKISTAN DELEGATION TO CENTO ECONOMIC
COMMITTEE MEETING, ON MARCH 18 TO GO OVER THE USG'S
NEGATIVE DECISION ON THE MICROWAVE SYSTEM WITH HIM IN
ADVANCE. PALMER REMINDED MALIK THAT OUR OFFER (AT 1975
MINISTERIAL MEETING) HAD BEEN CONDITIONAL ON AN ACCEPTABLE
FEASIBILITY STUDY AND IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER SOURCES OF

FINANCING. HE EXPLAINED THAT OUR CAREFUL AND SEARCHING ANALYSIS OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY PROVIDED LAST JANUARY SHOWED THAT THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE PROJECT WAS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE; CONSEQUENTLY, IT WOULD NOT BE CONSONANT WITH SECTION 611 OF THE FAA FOR US TO ATTEMPT TO GO AHEAD WITH IT. HOWEVER, WE WERE VERY PLEASED TO HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL TO SUGGEST TO THE GOP, ONE THAT FIT SQUARELY WITHIN USG CRITERIA FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS MEETING A CENTO PRIORITY: THE \$500,000 WOULD BE USED TO FUND A CENTO PROJECT IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

3. MALIK'S INITIAL REACTION WAS ONE OF KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT. HE SAID THAT HE HAD ALREADY INSTRUCTED HIS OTHER DELEGATION MEMBERS NOT TO PRESS US TOO HARD FOR THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS PAKISTAN HAD HOPED TO RECEIVE, BUT IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO HIM THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY QUESTION ABOUT THE \$500,000 COMMITMENT. HE WENT ON TO WONDER OUT LOUD - "PERSONALLY," HE SAID - WHETHER SUCH A DECISION COULD BE "POLITICALLY CORRECT" IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE MICROWAVE OFFER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BILATERALLY AT HIGH LEVELS BETWEEN THE USG AND THE GOP. HE COULD IMAGINE THAT THIS DECISION MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS ONE MORE SIGNAL THAT THE USG DID NOT REALLY TAKE CENTO SERIOUSLY. THE ROLE OF THE NON-REGIONAL MEMBERS, HE SAID, WAS CRUCIAL TO CENTO. THE REGIONALS, AFTER ALL, ALREADY HAD RCD, SO THAT CENTO WAS NOT AN ESSENTIAL ORGANIZATION FOR FURTHERING REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS. HE SPECULATED THAT THIS USG DECISION MIGHT EVEN FUEL DOUBTS "BY OUR LEADER" ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF CENTO.

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4. THE GOP, MALIK SAID, WOULD BE GOING OVER THE MICROWAVE FEASIBILITY STUDY ONCE AGAIN, TO SEE IF THERE WAS SOME WAY THEY COULD CHANGE OUR VIEW OF THE ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE MAIN IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT FOR THE GOP WAS PROBABLY NON-ECONOMIC, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE GOP WOULD PROBABLY GO AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT IN ANY EVENT.

5. IN THE EVENT THE USG COULD NOT BE PERSUADED TO CHANGE ITS MIND ON THE MICROWAVE, MALIK SAID, THE GOP WAS PLEASED TO HEAR THAT THE USG WOULD MAKE THE \$500,000 AVAILABLE IN THE CENTO CONTEXT FOR OTHER PURPOSES. HE HAD SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE IDEA OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, HOWEVER. THE US AND SEVERAL OTHER DONORS WERE ALREADY HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THIS AREA IN PAKISTAN, AND TO INVOLVE CENTO WOULD FURTHER FRAGMENT OUTSIDE DONOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH. PALMER SAID WE WOULD IN PRINCIPLE BE RESPONSIVE TO OTHER PROPOSALS FOR USING THE

MONEY, PROVIDING THEY MET USG AND CENTO CRITERIA AND BEARING IN MIND THAT IT SHOULD BENEFIT AT LEAST ONE OTHER CENTO COUNTRY IN SOME DEGREE. IF THE GOP WAS NOT INTERESTED IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IDEAS, IT MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER A MAKRAN FISHERIES PROJECT. MALIK SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO WORK UP SOME OTHER SUGGESTIONS. HE HOPED THE MONEY COULD FINANCE "SOMETHING CONCRETE ON THE GROUND."

6. TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT AT THE FORMAL MEETING SESSION WAS MOST RESTRICTED. MAGRK MADE ALLUSION TO HIS FEAR THAT DOUBTS WOULD BE RAISED ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF CENTO IN HIS MARCH 19 OPENING STATEMENT, WHEN HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT CENTO WAS GOING THROUGH A PHASE OF "TEMPORARY LOSS OF FERVOR," WHICH HE HOPED IT WOULD OVERCOME. THIS STATEMENT DID NOT

MENTION THE MICROWAVE SYSTEM. WHEN THE MICROWAVE SYSTEM CAME UP UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5(1), AND DSYG(E) AND THE THREE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REGIONAL DELEGATIONS MADE VERY BRIEF STATEMENTS SUPPORTING THE MICROWAVE PROJECT. FOLLOWING PALMER'S EXPLANATION OF THE USG POSITION AND PROPOSAL FOR ALTERNATIVE USE OF THE FUNDS, THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION IN A RESTRAINED STATEMENT EXPRESSED ITS KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT, REITERATED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT, SAID THAT IT WOULD TRY TO CONVINCE US OF THE ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF THE PROJECT, AND "TOOK NOTE" OF THE ALTERNATIVE OFFER. MALIK, WHO WAS CHAIRING THE MEETING, MADE A STATEMENT "IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD OF THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION," ESSENTIALLY REPEATING THE PREVIOUS ONE FROM THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION. THE OTHER DELEGATION SAID NOTHING, AND PALMER ENDED THE DISCUSSION BY THANKING THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION FOR THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY HAD RESPONDED.

7. COMMENT: UK DELEGATE SHARES OUR VIEW THAT PAKISTANI REACTION -- AT MALIK'S LEVEL -- WAS QUITE SUBDUED. IN CORRIDOR DISCUSSION, PAKISTAN POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICIAL MADE CLEAR THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE USG TO SUPPORT MICROWAVE PROJECT. (MARCH 20 SESSION PRODUCED A WRANGLE BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND US DELS, OVER WORDING OF REFERENCE IN DSYGKEL' PROGRAM REPORT TO OUR MICROWAVE OFFER. ATMOSPHERICALLY, IT WAS HELPFUL THAT AT THE END OF THAT SESSION PALMER COULD CONFIRM 1975 OFFER OF FIVE (CU-FUNDED) FELLOWSHIPS FOR CENTO REGIONALS IN FY/78. THIS WAS WARMLY WELCOMED BY REGIONALS. BYROAD UNQUOTE VANCE.

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